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ART. VIII.—*Mémoires Inédits de Madame la Comtesse de Genlis sur le dixhuitième siècle et la Révolution Française, depuis 1756, jusqu' à nos jours.* 10 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1825.

Before proceeding to examine this work, we wish to say a few words upon the department of literature to which it belongs; and in which the French language is far richer than that of any other nation. It is pleasant enough to step occasionally behind the curtain, and to see the operation of the moving forces, by which the great enginery of the world is kept in action; and we are enabled to do this, in a considerable degree, by the record of their own lives and characters, which men of political and literary eminence have sometimes bequeathed to us. In this way, the dark passages of history are illustrated, and valuable materials provided for those whose vocation it may be to write it hereafter; the state of society and manners at particular periods is more clearly revealed to us; and, what though less important, is certainly not less interesting, portraits of the wise and eminent are drawn, not as history paints them, in their robes of state, but in the careless and familiar garb of ordinary life. It is almost superfluous to say, how much more exact and satisfactory would be our knowledge of the state of society and manners in former times, if the business of writing memoirs had been fashionable at an early period; or how much light would have been shed upon various portions of English history, if the actors in its eventful scenes had less frequently left to others the task of recording their most remarkable achievements. We are aware, that many of the great Generals of England have been thought to resemble Cæsar more in a military, than in a literary point of view; but the real cause of this deficiency, is probably to be traced more directly to the fact, that this species of literature does not seem to be in all respects adapted to English taste. The French, on the contrary, have excelled in it, in consequence of some peculiar traits of character. Their memoirs are written with all the ease and freedom of conversation; while in England, not only no man speaks of himself, but can hardly be brought to speak of another, without resorting to all the grave dignity of historical narration. This propensity is particularly obvious in English biography, which is too often

deficient in what should constitute its principal attraction, familiar details of a personal and private nature. The life of Pitt, for example, is a solemn history of the age; and there are many other works, to which a similar objection may be made, but to which we need not here refer. It is not improbable, that some have been prevented from writing their own memoirs, by an apprehension of being liable to the charge of vanity. This was the ground, upon which the really interesting and valuable memoirs of Burnet were assailed by the merciless ridicule of Swift; nor was the accusation in that instance, wholly unfounded; but the example of Dr. Franklin may serve to show, that it is very possible for a man to write his own memoirs, without being considered unreasonably vain. A few years since, one of the distinguished officers of our revolution, in writing an account of his own adventures, thought it expedient to avoid too frequent a use of the first personal pronoun, and spoke of himself under the style of ‘our General;’ a descriptive phrase, which though better on the whole than that of ‘our hero,’ is far less eligible than the mode adopted by Cæsar and Napoleon. In the French writers, we find no such excessive delicacy. They remind us rather of one of their countrymen, who never spoke of himself, without taking off his hat. They are firmly persuaded, that whatever relates to themselves must be interesting, and seldom fail to render it so; and their literature has in consequence been enriched with a series of memoirs, many of which are interesting, and some of permanent and real value. It may be proper, however, to remark, that some deduction must not unfrequently be made from the credit accorded to most of them, owing to the prejudices of their writers, who have been sometimes tempted, if not wholly to pervert the truth, at least to invest it with a doubtful coloring.

The Memoirs of Madame de Genlis form no exception to the remarks, which we have just offered in regard to this class of works in general. Several of the first volumes are extremely interesting; but we are bound in candor to acknowledge, that some of the last present as melancholy specimens of prosing, as the imagination can easily conceive. The ninth consists principally of a collection of anecdotes, which seem to be inserted in it simply to refresh the memory, as very many of them are taken without the alteration of a word or letter, from the preceding volumes; while the tenth and last has been reserved as a receptacle for all the fragments, with which the

world had not been previously favored. Although Madame de Genlis does not belong precisely to the first class of writers, she, nevertheless, filled for a long time a considerable space in the public eye ; and her recent death, at a very advanced age, affords a fit occasion for a cursory notice of some of the leading incidents of her life, to which we shall add a few extracts from the volumes before us.

Madame de Genlis was born, January 21, 1746, at Champcéry, a small village of Burgundy ; and on the very same day, the opening flower had nearly been unkindly crushed. The *Bailli* of the place called to offer his congratulations to her father upon the joyful occasion, and was proceeding to install his portly person in the chair, on which her infant ladyship was laid. Nothing but the sudden and vigorous interposition of the nurse could have averted the impending danger, and preserved more than a hundred volumes from being irretrievably blotted from the circle of French literature. If any doubt existed in regard to the early developement of her talent and beauty, her own emphatic testimony upon the subject has set the question at rest. At the age of seven, she was placed under the care of a governess of sixteen, who was at all events to instruct her in music, and in the next place to improve her mind by giving her lessons in Father Buffier's history ; but the narrative of the learned father was soon laid aside, by joint agreement, for the more edifying instruction of Scuderi's romances, and the dramas of Mademoiselle Barbier. Before she was taught to write, she began to extemporise romantic stories ; which, owing to her deficiency in that important requisite, are lost to the world. About the same time her mother composed a comic opera, in which the young lady was called upon to play the part of *Cupid*, and personated the character with so much success, and so entirely to her own satisfaction, that, notwithstanding the lapse of seventy years, she has given us a description of her dress in it, with all the professional accuracy of the *Petit Courier des Dames*. For some time she wore this dress habitually, but at last exchanged it for that which custom has appropriated to the other sex ; to the use of which she attributes the perfection of her gait, and the ease and freedom of her manner. During a whole year, at a period of life somewhat later, she spent regularly seven hours in each day, very often eight or nine, and occasionally from ten to twelve, in playing upon the harp ; her favorite instrument, and one, upon which she appears to have performed with unusual grace and skill.

We have given these details, not with the design of casting ridicule or censure on Madame de Genlis, but in order to present some idea of what female education must have been among the higher classes in France for some years prior to the revolution. It appears to have been conducted according to the principle dogmatically asserted by one of Shakspeare's clowns, that beauty is the work of art, and that reading and writing come by nature. In fact, the condition and character of the nobility of France, when the storm at length swept over them, were not wholly unlike those of the ancient world, when it was overwhelmed by the deluge. The want of morality and virtue was poorly supplied by a gorgeous veil of exterior decorum; which, though it may have weakened in some respects the force of pernicious example, consecrated, instead of removing the evil of vice, by investing it with unnatural attractions. There was much of that dignified loyalty, that generous and lofty courtesy, that proud and chivalrous sense of honor, so splendidly portrayed by the inspired eloquence of Burke; but there was also a sad alloy of baser qualities, of open frivolity and ill-concealed vice, which checks the sympathy we naturally feel, when the exalted are brought down to the dust. Still so powerful was the influence of this society upon the imagination and the heart, that we see Madame de Genlis, amidst all her high, and doubtless sincere professions of religious zeal, stating, apparently without the least perception of their impropriety, circumstances to which a person of real delicacy would scarcely incline to allude; and we find her, also, at the period of her subsequent misfortunes, looking back to it with the same feeling, with which the exiled Hebrew remembered the Holy City, as he wandered in a strange land. It should be recollected, however, to her honor, that she had sufficient force of character to withstand and overcome that influence to such a degree, as to acquire and preserve a taste for literary pursuits, and an active industry, to which she owes all her reputation.

The beauty and talent of Madame de Genlis, together with her taste for music, which was developed in her earliest infancy, had procured for her a welcome reception in the most brilliant circles of Paris; and to these titles to success in society, was added that of a connexion with the family of Orleans. She was the niece of Madame de Montesson, who became the wife of the Duke of Orleans, by a marriage, which was denominated *secret*, because, though known to all the world, it was not

acknowledged at court. The intercourse between the aunt and niece does not appear to have been remarkably cordial. Both had literary pretensions. Those of the former were not supported by much taste or talent ; but she made ample amends for this deficiency by the strength of her passions, which were exhibited in the most consistent and relentless hatred of her younger rival ; who was on her side not slow to requite the obligation by an exposition, more triumphant than charitable, of the system of tactics by which her aunt induced the Duke of Orleans to espouse her, in opposition to his judgment and inclinations. Indeed, this litigious propensity appears to have taken deep root in the family of our author. A bitter controversy was carried on for a long time between her mother and grandmother, which was terminated only by the death of the latter.

When Madame de Genlis was about fifteen, she received the offer of the heart and rent-roll of the Baron D'Andlau, a veteran spark of sixty, whose suit was supported by the interest of her mother ; but as she testified some reluctance in accepting the proposal, her mother, in order to set in a strong light the folly of her conduct, married him herself. About this time one of her letters fell accidentally into the possession of the Count de Genlis ; whose admiration of the talent displayed in it, was soon transferred to its fair writer, and who espoused her for her style, as the learned ladies in Moliere embraced the pedant of the play for the love of Greek. He was an officer of reputation, and of a noble family. The immediate effect of her marriage was to extend her circle of amusements among the relatives of her husband ; and she has given a lively account of one, to which, so far as we are informed, the married ladies of this country are not much addicted. One evening at ten, she went with her brother into a little village adjoining Genlis, where they amused themselves with beating against the windows of the ale-houses, and calling for spirit ; taking due care to effect a retreat before the publican could reply in person to his vexatious customers. This charming jest was several times repeated in the course of the evening, and always with complete success. 'Happy age,' she remarks, 'in which pleasure is so cheaply purchased, when nothing exalts the imagination, or disturbs the heart.' A more refined satisfaction, however, was at this time afforded her, by the opportunity which she enjoyed of becoming familiarly acquainted with distinguished literary

men; but it may be proper here to remark, that her judgments in regard to most of them, are strongly affected by her prejudices. Like another French personage of some note, whenever she differs in opinion from others, or maintains a quarrel, she is invariably in the right. Her hostility to the philosophers was uniform and unrelenting; and though some have thought fit to ascribe it to the treatment which her works received from them, we see no reason why it should not be attributed, in part at least, to her natural aversion to their principles. Whatever may have been its cause, it was at all events too indiscriminate, and carried to an unreasonable extent. She had previously seen and disliked d'Alembert; and her prejudice was now ripened into utter aversion. She describes him as mean in his person, and disagreeable in manner; and by way of illustrating his kindness of heart, declares, that, with all the foreboding apprehensions of affection, he composed a funeral eulogy upon his intimate friend Madame Geoffrin, during her last illness, in order to have it in a state of preparation for the press at the very instant of her death. His attachment to Madame de Genlis, such as it was, was considerably impaired by an occurrence, which we think might reasonably justify the wrath of a philosopher. M. de Sauvigny, it seems, had regularly sent to her all the academic eulogies of d'Alembert. One day he presented her with one to which the name of the author was not attached, but with which she was so much gratified, that she despatched a note to d'Alembert, expressing her satisfaction in animated terms, and informing him, that she considered it by far the best of all his discourses. Unluckily the eulogy was the production of Condorcet; and d'Alembert, as may be supposed, was rather offended than otherwise by her compliment.

The following extract describes her interview with another distinguished personage. She had been apprised by one of her friends, of the intention of her husband to present to her the actor Preville, in the character of Rousseau; and shortly afterwards the philosopher himself was announced.

‘Expecting, of course,’ says Madame de Genlis, ‘to see Preville only, it was with some difficulty that I promised to do my best to entertain J. J. Rousseau. I waited impatiently for his entrance, believing that nothing could be more truly comic than Crispin in the guise of a philosopher. My spirits were so extravagant, that M. de Genlis, knowing my natural timidity, was lost in astonishment. It was impossible for him to imagine how the expectation

of receiving so grave a personage, should produce so strange an effect; and he thought me wholly beside myself, when he saw me laugh as Rousseau entered the room. Nothing could be more agreeable than his appearance, though, to me, it was a mere masquerade. His coat, his claret-colored stockings, his little round periwig, in short, his whole costume and manner, gave me the idea of a remarkably well-acted comic scene. With great effort, I preserved a sober countenance, and, after stammering a few complimentary phrases, sat down. Fortunately for me, the conversation took a lively turn. I said nothing, but laughed occasionally with so much heartiness, that Rousseau himself appeared disposed to share my mirth. He said many pleasant things upon the subject of youth in general. I thought Preville very intelligent, but it appeared to me, that Rousseau in his place, would have been offended with me. He then addressed himself to me; and being perfectly free from embarrassment, I uttered every thing that came uppermost in my mind. He thought me very original, while I, on the other hand, considered him the best actor I had ever seen. I was never pleased with caricatures; and what gratified me in this instance, was the nature and simplicity of the comedian, who appeared to me to be far greater than I had ever thought him on the stage; though he certainly made Rousseau by far too gay and good-humored. I played on the harp for him, and sung some of the airs of the *Devin du Village*; while Rousseau listened with the air of satisfaction, which the simplicity of childhood usually inspires. On taking leave, he promised to return and dine with us the next day. Nothing could have given me greater pleasure, and I accompanied him to the door, with all the pretty compliments imaginable. When he was fairly gone, I laid aside all restraint, and laughed outright; M. de Genlis all the while regarding me with a grave and uneasy expression, which by no means tended to diminish my mirth. "Now you are angry," said I, "because you did not succeed in deceiving me; but how could you think me simple enough to mistake Preville for Rousseau?" "Preville!" "Oh deny it, if you will; I am very easily convinced." "Are you insane?" "Preville, I acknowledge, is charming, and nobody could act better; but he played the part of a very agreeable old gentleman, and not of Rousseau, who would have been provoked by my reception of him." At these words, M. de Sauvigny and M. de Genlis laughed so immoderately, that I began to be surprised in my turn; and my confusion may be imagined when I ascertained, that it was Rousseau himself whom I had been entertaining in this agreeable way.'

The acquaintance, thus commenced, was soon interrupted. M. de Genlis offered Rousseau some Sillery wine, of which he

consented to receive two bottles. M. de Genlis had the hardihood to send him two dozen ; and the affront was so flagrant, that Rousseau never entirely forgave it. His friendship for Madame de Genlis, which lasted a few days longer, was at length broken off by an occurrence of about equal importance. One evening he agreed to accompany her to the theatre, on condition that the party should occupy a private box. When they had taken their places, Rousseau insisted on raising the blind to accommodate her, while she was equally desirous of closing it to gratify him. In the mean time, the attention of the audience was attracted towards him, and he accused her forthwith of making a spectacle of him, like a wild beast at a fair ; while she on the other hand insisted, that he thrust his head forward repeatedly with the express purpose of being seen, and was offended because the recognition was not followed by applause. At any rate, he took his leave in transports of wrath ; and Madame de Genlis, with no great reason, piques herself upon the steadiness with which she afterwards resisted his efforts to effect a reconciliation. Her whole account of this singular personage reminds the reader very strongly of that given by St. Pierre.

Shortly after her marriage, Madame de Genlis, at the desire of the family of Orleans, took up her residence at the *Palais Royal*. To this step, which she ever afterwards regarded as a fatal error, she often alludes as the cause of all her subsequent misfortunes. It was ambition, doubtless, which induced her to sacrifice the domestic tranquillity to which she imagined herself so strongly attached ; though the prospect of a brilliant provision for her husband and children was not wholly without its influence. Her beauty and talent had made her known in the highest circles ; and she could not readily consent to relinquish the hope of a more complete triumph in the midst of a dazzling and luxurious court. Experience had not yet taught her, that the bright sunshine has little power to calm the agitated waves ; that human nature, in every situation, is still the same ; and she appears to have been surprised to discover, that any dark and relentless passions could find entrance into such a paradise as this. She complains that cold and malicious looks were fixed upon her ; that her actions were ridiculed and misconstrued. The truth undoubtedly was, that she set a high estimate upon her own pretensions, and soon found, that the claims of others interfered with hers. The descent was very di-

rect and easy from jealousy to envy and all uncharitableness ; and it is very obvious, that while Madame de Genlis was repining at the illiberality of the ladies by whom she was surrounded, she was herself possessed, perhaps unconsciously, by the same unfortunate spirit. The gentlemen vied with each other in offering her their homage ; but all this availed her nothing, so long as she was the object of female aversion. Her spirits were broken, and her health impaired. During one of the journeys, which her physician directed her to take, she paid a visit to Voltaire at Ferney. We give a portion of her account of her dining at his residence.

‘ We took our seats at the table, but M. de Voltaire was far from being agreeable. He appeared to be in a constant passion with his servants ; crying out to them with a tone of voice so loud and shrill, that I several times involuntarily started from my chair. I had been previously apprised of this habit, which is not very common elsewhere in the presence of strangers ; but it was easy to perceive that it was a habit with him, as his servants gave no indications of surprise or alarm. After dinner, M. de Voltaire, knowing my fondness for music, called upon Madame Denis to play upon the harpsichord. Her style of performance reminded me of the age of Louis XIV ; but it could not be numbered among the most agreeable associations with that delightful period. She had just completed a piece of Rameau, when a pretty little girl of seven or eight entered the room, and ran to embrace M. de Voltaire, calling him Papa. He returned her caresses with infinite grace ; and seeing that I contemplated the scene with pleasure, told me, that the little girl was a great grand daughter of the great Corneille, on whose mother he had bestowed a marriage portion. How would this have affected me, if I had not called to mind those commentaries, in which injustice and envy are so awkwardly betrayed ! In fact, I was every moment wounded by strange contrasts, and my admiration was constantly checked, and even destroyed, by odious recollections and revolting extravagance.

‘ After M. de Voltaire had received several visitors from Geneva, he proposed to us a drive in his carriage. The horses were brought, and he, his niece, Madame de St. Julien, and myself, took our seats in the *berline*. He carried us into the village, for the purpose of showing us the houses he had erected, and some benevolent institutions which he had founded. Here he appears far greater than in his writings ; for the effects of an intelligent liberality are every where visible, and one finds it difficult to believe that the same hand which has recorded so much impiety, wickedness and falsehood, has done so much that is noble, judicious

and useful. It was his custom to show this village to strangers, and to speak of it plainly, but without the slightest affectation—to explain every thing which he had accomplished, without any appearance of vanity. There is scarcely any other person of whom the same remark could be made. When we returned, the conversation upon what we had seen became very animated. At evening, I took my leave. M. de Voltaire urged me to remain to dine the next day; but I was anxious to return to Geneva.

‘All the portraits and busts of Voltaire resemble him strongly; but no artist has done full justice to his eyes. I expected to find them brilliant and full of fire; and they were in fact the finest I had ever seen; but they had at the same time a softness of expression, which it is impossible to describe; the soul of *Zaire* shone through them. This charming expression was entirely destroyed by his very malicious laugh and smile. He was quite infirm, and his gothic movements made him appear older than he really was; his voice was sepulchral, and the more strange in its tone, as, though by no means deaf, he had a habit of raising it to a very high pitch. When his conversation did not turn upon religion, or his personal enemies, it was simple and unpretending, and his talent did not fail to render it delightful. It appeared to me, however, that he could not endure to hear another express an opinion different from his own; the slightest contradiction made the tone of his voice very angry and piercing.’

We come now to a period in the life of Madame de Genlis, in which she presents herself in a more interesting point of view; in which she conducted herself with a disinterestedness and assiduity, which indicated a high sense of duty, and a devoted zeal in the discharge of it; and to which some recent events have imparted an interest, which it did not previously possess. At about the age of thirty, she yielded to the earnest request of the Duke of Chartres, better known afterwards as the Duke of Orleans, and during the revolution, by the name of *Egalité*, that she should retire from the world, and employ herself in the education of his children. His three sons, as well as a daughter, were confided to her care; and she assumed, in consequence, the rather unusual title of *gouverneur*. The eldest of her pupils, Louis Philip, was then Duke of Valois. At the death of his grandfather, which occurred shortly afterwards, he became Duke of Chartres, and after the execution of his father, Duke of Orleans; a title which he has very lately exchanged for that of King of the French. The second was the Duke of Montpensier, and the third, the Count of Beaujolais. The youngest bore the name of Mademoiselle

d' Orleans, which she still retains. Madame de Genlis, as we have already remarked, devoted herself to the task of educating these children with untiring industry and zeal; and probably contributed, in no small degree, to form the character of the present King. It may be agreeable to our readers, to know the opinion which she appears to have entertained of him at an early age.

'This morning I received a touching letter from the Duke of Chartres, which I shall preserve as a precious memorial of him. The following passage is faithfully copied from it: "I will resign all amusements until I shall have completed my education, that is, until April, 1790, in order to devote my money to benevolent purposes. On the first day of every month, we will agree upon the objects, to which it may most advantageously be applied. I beg you to accept my most sacred honor as a pledge for this. I should prefer that my plan may be known to ourselves only; but you well know, that I do not now, nor ever shall, keep any thing secret from you."

'The character of the Duke of Chartres is greatly improved, particularly within the past year. He was naturally well disposed; and he has become intelligent and virtuous. He has nothing of the frivolity usually found in children of the same age; and he despises the airs, the dress, the jewels and ornaments, of which the young are commonly so fond. He has no attachment to money, is very disinterested, despises luxury, and his disposition is very noble; in short, like his brothers and sister, he has an excellent heart, which, with the aid of reflection, will become the source of every other valuable quality.'

The sole superintendence of the education of her pupils, together with the invention of gymnastic exercises, and new methods of instruction, gave hardly sufficient employment to the active industry of Madame de Genlis. In addition to this, she prepared for their amusement and benefit her *Théâtre d'Education*, *Adèle et Théodore*, and *Veillées du Château*, the last of which is familiarly known in this country by the name of *Tales of the Castle*. These were the first productions, by which she acquired reputation as an author. But the work which excited by far the most general interest, was one which she published at this time upon the subject of religion, considered as the basis of happiness and true philosophy. The sensation created by its appearance was very great. It was a subject of no small surprise to see 'any good' coming out of the *Palais Royal*; but when the first sentiment of astonish-

ment was over, this ill-fated work appeared destined to animate all Paris to a general battle. It was denounced by the stern theologians as deficient in orthodoxy; the fashionable world, not usually the most competent judges in matters of this sort, agreed unanimously, that Madame de Genlis had mistaken her vocation; some went so far as to accuse her of an unpardonable violation of the principles of her own book, in having pillaged all that was valuable in it from another writer; and the philosophers, whom she regarded from this time forth as her bitter enemies, assailed her with a pitiless torrent of ridicule and slander. Some of her sex would have been a little startled by this commotion among the elements; but Madame de Genlis was not so easily daunted. To the fashionable world, and the theologians, she discreetly refrained from making any reply; but she henceforth made war upon the philosophers with a degree of vigor, which would have been praiseworthy in proportion to its fierceness, if she had not assigned charity rather too low a rank in the scale of her religious graces.

The revolution at length came on; and Madame de Genlis has been sometimes accused of having exulted in its progress; a charge against which she has labored very zealously to defend herself. Whether the accusation was well founded or otherwise, is a question of very little moment; but it is hardly credible that it could have been true to any considerable extent. Like many others, whose insight into political mysteries was far deeper than hers, she may have regarded its beginning as the dawning of a golden age, destined to realize the dreams of which sages had predicted and poets sung; and never thought of looking in the calm and clear sky for the ominous signs of that tremendous hurricane, which swept over the land with a fury and desolation unparalleled before in the history of man. Her delusion, if it existed, was but of short duration. It could hardly have continued, when her husband had perished upon the scaffold, and she was herself wandering in poverty and exile. Alarmed by the threatening aspect of the times, she went with the youngest of her pupils to England, which she had visited the year before, and where she had an opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with many illustrious persons, of whom it is sufficient to name Fox and Burke, to show, that her reputation had gone before her. But the Duke of Orleans, who had already attached himself to the Jacobin party, soon

sent orders for the return of his daughter. They returned only to enter upon a new scene of peril. The horrible massacres of September, 1792, had just taken place. The daughter of the Duke of Orleans, by a recent decree, was included in the class of *émigrés*, not having returned at the time prescribed in the decree; and Madame de Genlis, to secure the safety of both, accompanied her to Tournay, in Belgium, at that time a neutral country. This city was occupied by the army of Dumouriez; but the approach of the Austrians induced the exiles to retire into Switzerland, where the influence of General Montesquieu at length procured them an asylum in the Convent of St. Claire; and Madame de Genlis was separated from her pupil, who left her in order to take refuge with her aunt, the Princess of Conti. For many years from this time, the history of the House of Orleans has all the interest of romance. That of the present King is too well known to require repetition; but we will for a moment advert to the fortunes and fate of his two brothers, with which it was, most honorably to himself, connected. They were imprisoned for a considerable time at Marseilles, and occasionally treated with great severity, as appears from a narrative of their sufferings since published by the Duke of Montpensier, the elder of the two. It was afterwards proposed by the Directory to release them, on condition that they, with their elder brother, should depart from Europe. The proposition was instantly accepted; and the Duke of Orleans took passage for Philadelphia, where he was soon afterwards joined by his brothers. They lived together for some time in this country, in a state of comparative obscurity; but learning subsequently that their mother was in Spain, they made several efforts to rejoin her there, without success. They then went to England, where the Duke of Montpensier died, in 1807, after a lingering illness, at the age of thirty-two. The health of the Count de Beaujolais was also declining, and he was carried by his brother to the milder climate of Malta, in the hope of obtaining relief; but the progress of his disease was so rapid, that he died a few days after his arrival. Their sister, in the mean time, had not been without her portion of misfortune. After many vicissitudes, she returned to France in 1815, where her character is said to fulfil all the promise of her infancy. Soon after their separation, Madame de Genlis quitted Switzerland, and went to Altona, where she remained several months. The King of

Prussia, deeming her political principles much too liberal for his dominions, courteously drove her away from Berlin ; while the Directory considered them by far too monarchical for the meridian of Paris. She then went to Hamburgh, where she remained until the accession of a less benighted monarch permitted her to fix her residence again at Berlin. It is certainly very honorable to her, that during the greater part of the period of her exile, she was enabled to rely for subsistence almost wholly on the productions of her inexhaustible pen. Her account of this portion of her life, although upon the whole somewhat tedious, is not destitute of interesting details. While residing at Hamburgh, she received a visit from Klopstock, of which she gives the following account.

‘ There are certain persons, who are entirely insupportable, when you first encounter them. Their object is not to become acquainted with you, but to give you an exalted impression of their own knowledge and abilities. I shall not soon forget my first interview with the famous author of the *Messiah*, which took place while I was residing at Hamburgh, in the house of a clergyman, M. Volters. He had requested permission to visit me, and came while I was sitting with my niece. Seeing a little, hump-backed, ugly old man hobbling into the room, I rose and conducted him to an arm-chair, in which he seated himself without saying a word ; he then crossed his legs, fixed himself comfortably in his chair, and assumed the air of one, who intends to maintain his post for a considerable time. At last, in a very shrill tone, he proposed this singular question ; “ Which, in your opinion, Madame, is the best prose-writer, Voltaire or Buffon ? ” This commencement of a thesis, rather than a conversation, almost petrified me ; but Klopstock, who was much more anxious to explain his own opinion, than to ascertain mine, did not wait for a reply. “ For my part,” he resumed, “ I give the preference to Voltaire, for several reasons ; in the first place, because..... ” He then stated at least a dozen reasons, in a pretty long harangue ; and proceeded to speak of his residence at Dresden, and in Denmark, of the attentions which had been paid to him, and of the translation which some emigrant had made of his *Messiah*. During his whole visit, which lasted about three hours, I did not utter six syllables ; but he went away very well satisfied with my *conversation*, and remarked the same evening to a friend, that he found me very agreeable. My reputation was surely purchased at a very cheap rate.’

We feel tempted, also, to give an extract of a letter written
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by Talleyrand at Philadelphia, to Madame de Genlis. It is plain to us, that Mr. Moore must have borrowed his

‘Oh! had we some bright little isle of our own,’

from the first part of it; while the latter part appears to illustrate the talent, which that single-hearted personage is reputed to possess in high perfection, of using the gift of speech to conceal his thoughts.

‘Separated as I am from all those in whom my heart is interested, I am now engrossed by the idea of that which may enable me to return to them again, without reason to dread any future separation; which may enable me to live with them apart from the rest of the world, where, with a few friends, we may create a little world of our own, free from all the folly and evil that now besets our unhappy Europe. My disposition is unchanged; I am no more fond of violence or hatred, than in former times. My thoughts no longer dwell upon my enemies; I am laboring to repair my fortune, with all the assiduity which the purpose to which I intend to apply it can inspire; and in this occupation, my imagination finds a sentiment of pleasure as well as hope. If my efforts should be rewarded by success, I shall consider the years thus spent as the most useful of my life; I shall count myself among the small number of the fortunate.

‘This is a country where honest men may prosper, but by no means so well as rogues, who have naturally many advantages. It was once my intention to write you upon the subject of America; but I soon discovered, that the attempt would be an absurd one. I reserve my observations for the conversations which I hope to have with you in long evenings to come. America is very like all other countries; there are some leading facts, the knowledge of which will enable you to understand it, as well as the cabinet of Copenhagen can do. You know what its form of government is; you know that it has vast tracts of land, where a freehold may be purchased at an infinitely lower price than in Europe. You know that the country is new, and destitute of capital, but abounding in enterprise; without manufactures, because the price of labor is, and will be for a long time very high. Combine these facts, and you have a better idea of America than most travellers; better even than M. de L., who sits by me making notes, asking for papers, and who is a thousand times more curious than the inquisitive traveller of Sterne.’

It has already been remarked, that the political conduct and sentiments of Madame de Genlis during the revolution, were severely criticised; and she found, or at least deemed it

necessary to enter into a formal justification of them. Whatever they may have been, she did not hesitate to avail herself of the permission given her to return to France, after the tottering despotism of the Directory had been overthrown by Bonaparte. It was the ambition of that remarkable person, to withdraw the eyes of men from the iron rigor of his military power, by fixing them upon the dazzling brilliancy of a new Augustan age. He labored, therefore, to collect around him all those who had the discretion to devote themselves to scientific or literary pursuits, without entering the forbidden field of politics. There was, perhaps, some reason for excepting Madame de Staël from his act of general amnesty; for, as he correctly observed, her literature and her conversation were both political; and even her flattery wounded him, because it pointed to a moral greatness, to which he never permitted himself to aspire. She appears to have been honored by his cordial hatred, not unmingled with a sort of apprehension, which was exhibited in rather a singular way. We are assured, upon high authority, that the conqueror of Austerlitz and Jena, the arbiter of the fate of nations, published a most bitter *critique* in the *Moniteur*, upon Madame de Staël's *Corinne*. In Madame de Genlis, there was little of that perilous force of mind and character, which despotic authority has no small cause to fear. She had, moreover, the advantage of being in some degree connected with the old *régime*; the style and manners of which Bonaparte attempted to reproduce, as the old gilded coach of the Lord Mayor is paraded to adorn a city pageant. She was not unwilling to burn a little politic incense before him; and his gratitude furnished her with the substantial recompense of a lodging at the arsenal and a pension. It was his custom to require those about him to communicate to him, at stated periods, their opinions upon various subjects. The advantages of such a requisition are very obvious; as they provided him with the means of receiving information, which, if not always valuable, was probably sometimes of a description, which a less restricted press would have communicated in a more disagreeable way. It became the duty of Madame de Genlis to write every fifteen days upon the subjects of politics, finance, literature, morals, or such others, as she might select for herself. With laudable discretion, she avoided the subject of politics altogether; and confined her attention to that of literature and morals, particularly the last, with a zeal, which, if not always strictly according to knowledge, was at

least so earnest, that, as she herself observes, if the Emperor failed to become devout, it was no fault of hers. We are inclined to fear, however, from a specimen of this correspondence which she has given us, that the information which she gave the Emperor was not always of a perfectly authentic character. She assured him, among other things, that the multiplication of sects in England had produced universal skepticism among the Protestants; and that the clergy of that faith in Holland and Germany were all of them Deists. But she had the unimpeachable testimony of Talleyrand for believing, that the Emperor found her letters very charming. Being thus placed entirely at her ease in a political point of view, Madame de Genlis had abundant leisure for a controversy, in which she became involved with the projectors of a work, entitled *Universal Biography*, to which she was invited to become a contributor. She consented on condition that the contributions of certain individuals, whom she regarded as infidels, should be excluded; but her demand was not complied with, and she published the articles which she had already written, in a separate volume. A fierce war of pamphlets followed; until Madame de Genlis, fatigued with a contest in which there was less honor in victory than disgrace in defeat, was fain to forsake the field.

Madame de Genlis appears to have exulted in the return of the Bourbons, without much reason, so far as her own interests were concerned; as she went only once to Court after their restoration, and as far as we are informed, was not regarded by them with unusual favor. It is said, however, that the family of Orleans were not unmindful of their early obligations. From this period, she lived in a state of comparative obscurity; but her passion for writing was hardly mitigated by the growing infirmities of age; and the memoirs before us are in some degree remarkable as the production of her eightieth year. We do not propose to enter upon a critical examination of this or any of her other works; few of which have ever acquired much popularity in this country, or will be extensively read hereafter. They belong in general to a class, the interest of which is apt to be fleeting, and which seldom attain to a high and permanent rank in the literature of any nation. Her talent as a writer was not very early developed; but the zeal with which she prosecuted the work made ample amends for any uncommon delay in its commencement. In the course of

thirty years, she published not less than a hundred volumes. If they are deficient in some of the most essential requisites of romantic narrative, in profound knowledge of the heart, in skill to paint its stormy passions, and in fertility and power of invention, they are universally admitted to possess the rare merit of a rich and beautiful style. It is an involuntary tribute to her real desert, that her critics are not agreed in determining which of her various productions is the best. Some of them have selected the *Théâtre d'Education*, as the one by which she will continue to be known; while others are surprised, that any person should hesitate to prefer *Mademoiselle de Clermont* and *Madame de la Vallière*.

It is amusing, and not uninteresting, to observe in the personal character of Madame de Genlis, the manner in which the most contradictory qualities may be mingled in strong and almost ludicrous contrast. She intermits her usual philippics against Voltaire, to praise him for his exemplary modesty in speaking of himself. This is precisely the compliment which the conscience of the philosopher, however accommodating, would have found it most difficult to bestow on her in return; for it must be admitted, that what plain-spoken men would call vanity, stands but too conspicuously in the van of her many accomplishments. She entertained a deep, and doubtless a sincere aversion for the impious and profane; yet she dwelt with complacency on the delicate ingenuity of a few miserable verses, in which she was herself compared to the Creator of the Universe, beholding the work of his hands, and pronouncing it good. She inveighed against superstition with edifying seriousness; while she attributed all the misfortunes of her life to the neglect of a celestial vision, imparted to her during a severe illness. These inconsistencies, and others of a similar kind, may probably be found in greater or less degree, in the character and conduct of all; but they are not often acknowledged so freely, without the slightest apparent consciousness of their existence. It is but just, however, to confess, that the relinquishment of *rouge* at thirty, was an act of self-denial, which must have tasked, to the uttermost, the energies of a fashionable lady; particularly of one so sensitive as Madame de Genlis, upon the subject of personal beauty.

We are inclined to doubt, whether the critical talent of Madame de Genlis could have been of a very exalted order. Of the romances of Scott, she takes occasion to declare, that

they are wholly destitute of imagination, real interest, and fine writing, and are on the whole, very tedious. Her sentence upon the works of Lord Byron is hardly less severe. With respect to her contemporaries in general, she appears to have acted on the principle of one of Sheridan's characters, that it would be a pity to spoil a quarrel, which was a very pretty one as it was, by any sort of explanation. We regret to see her, besides depreciating the excellence of Joseph Chenier's literary works, accuse him of having suffered his unfortunate brother to perish upon the scaffold, when, by employing his personal credit during the reign of terror, he might have rescued him from destruction. We believe, on the contrary, that so far from having it in his power to avert his brother's fate, it was with difficulty that he preserved his own life, during the multiplied perils of that dreadful period. She tells us, on the authority of Chastellux, that it was the custom of Madame Necker, by way of preparation for dinner, to make copious notes beforehand of the conversation which she proposed to carry on with her guests—a practice not unlike that of the Abbé Raynal, who is said to have carried constantly with him a huge volume of anecdotes, for the purpose of discharging an apposite one *impromptu*, at the first convenient opportunity. This lady, she remarks, was a *philosopher*, or in other words an unbeliever, without being conscious of the fact. All this is not very flattering; but her daughter Madame de Staël, does not escape so easily. Her productions are criticised with a severity not altogether sanctioned by candor and justice; and the review is concluded with the solemn decision, that they are deficient in that superiority of style, which alone could render them immortal. Not less severe is her estimate of the merits of the interesting Madame de Cottin, who is accused of having pilaged her best things from the works of her accuser. In fact, Madame de Genlis appears to have regarded most of her contemporary writers as a lawless horde, whom she was bound, to the extent of her abilities, to denounce and exterminate.

We have had occasion to advert, with some degree of freedom, to the faults as well as foibles of the author of the *Memoirs* before us; but it should not be forgotten, that we are indebted to her own candor, in a great degree, for the knowledge of them; and we are bound in justice to remark, that she exhibited at the same time, some high qualities of mind, and estimable traits of character. She was for many years, very

popular as a writer, in a community not wholly without fastidiousness in the selection of its favorites; and if the form of romantic narrative, in which she excelled, has given place to others of a more exalted nature, it is some praise to have succeeded in a department of literature, in which none but the highest abilities could have attempted a reform. In her disposition, there was much of disinterestedness and magnanimity, and a readiness to make large sacrifices for the welfare of others, or to a sense of duty, which are certainly the indication of no ignoble spirit; and there was combined with these qualities, an earnestness in the cause of religion, which, if sometimes misguided by the prejudices arising from her education and position in society, was yet inspired by correct and honorable principle. The closing period of her life appears to have been as tranquil, as its meridian was disastrous. She died at the moment, when a new and most momentous chapter was about to be added to her country's eventful history; at the very opening of a great drama, in which her early and favorite pupil has been destined to play a most conspicuous part; and when, as she might have felt without affectation, her own character and principles were to be vindicated by the excellence of his.

ART. IX.—*A Manual of Political Economy, with particular reference to the Institutions, Resources and Condition of the United States.* By WILLARD PHILLIPS. 8vo. pp.278. Boston. 1828.

We owe an apology to our readers, for not having taken an earlier notice of this work, which is one of the most valuable that have yet appeared in the United States upon the important subject of which it treats. Mr. Phillips, who was already advantageously known to the public by his work on Insurance, and several other literary essays of great merit, has condensed into this volume the results of an extensive course of reading, matured and digested by patient reflection. Without perhaps proposing any entirely new ideas, he has subjected the whole compass of the science to a new examination; presented many questions under new points of view; discriminated, in general with great correctness, between the sound and unsound portions of the current theories; and developed some important truths in